

Rhys given the all clear

Many locals were elated to learn that Rhys Mortimer has been given the all clear by his neurosurgeon.

Rhys is a Year 12 student at Wee Waa High School. Principal Annabel Doust said it was music to her ears to hear the great news.

It was seven months ago that Rhys and his horse took a terrible knock while playing polocrosse for Narrabri, which saw him airlifted by the Westpac Rescue Helicopter to John Hunter Hospital.

Within an hour and a half of the helicopter taking off, Rhys was going through a range of tests to ascertain what damage had been done and by that evening he was being operated on to relieve pressure in his brain.

Rhys was placed into an induced coma for six days and remained in hospital for six weeks where he slowly had to learn how to do things for himself again, including relearning how to walk. The last thing that Rhys remembers about that day is bandaging his horse and getting ready to play.

Rhys' mother Tracey Mortimer said she couldn't believe how lucky her son had been.

The doctors stressed in terms of recovery, that everyone is different.

Based on the tests they had conducted, doctors suggested that it would take between 12 to 18 months

for his brain to recover.

"That it has been seven months is incredible," Mrs Mortimer said.

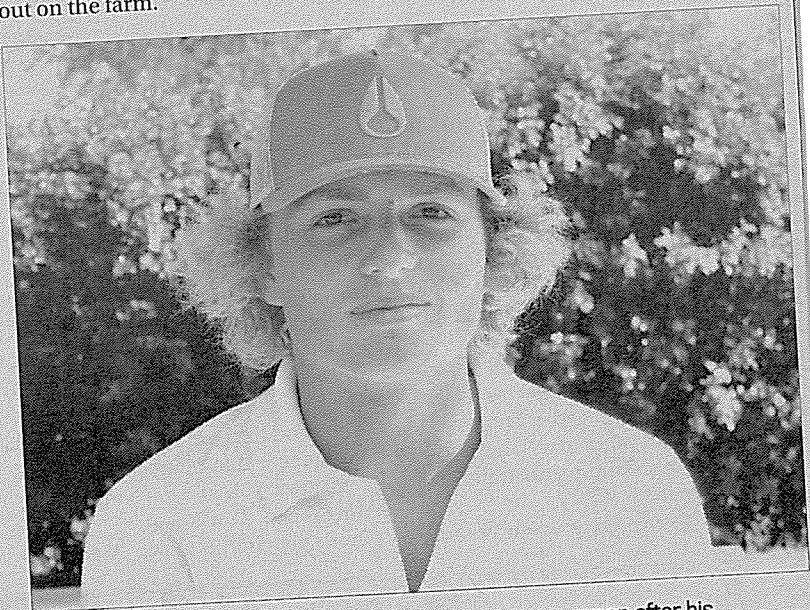
"We feel so lucky."

While not yet able to ride competitively or engage in any other jarring activity until at least the 12 month mark, Rhys said he was happy to be able to ride his horse again and be back driving the tractor and helping out on the farm.

Mrs Mortimer was full of praise for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

"How they responded with getting here so quickly, stabilising Rhys and getting him to Newcastle, all the while being so sensitive and compassionate was just incredible," she said.

"What it's taught our family is 'life is too short, if there's something you want to do, just get on and do it.'"



Rhys Mortimer has been given the all clear by his neurosurgeon after his polocrosse accident seven months ago.